

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 6, 8-11, 16, 18-21, 23, 27, 29, and 31-35 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer, and new claims 36-44 have been newly added. Consequently, claims 36-44 are currently pending in this application.

For the following reasons, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of all outstanding rejections in the final Office Action dated August 15, 2005.

In the final Office Action, claims 6, 8-11, 16, 19-21, 27, 29, and 31-34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Patent Application Publication No. 09-165681 to Sagusa et al. ("Sagusa") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,600,530 to Smith ("Smith") and U.S. Patent No. 6,101,969 to Niori et al. ("Niori"); claims 23 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,120,661 to Hirano ("Hirano") in view of Sagusa; and claim 18 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sagusa, Smith, and Niori in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,835,334 to McMillin et al. ("McMillin").

Although Applicants do not necessarily agree with the Examiner's rejections, Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections are rendered moot by cancellation of claims 6, 8-11, 16, 18-21, 23, 27, 29, and 31-35.

In place of cancelled claims 6, 8-11, 16, 18-21, 23, 27, 29, and 31-35, Applicants have presented new claims 36-44 to more clearly define the claimed subject matter. Applicants respectfully submit that new independent claim 36 and its dependent claims 37-44 define novel and non-obvious subject matter over the cited prior art references.

Applicants respectfully request the reconsideration of this application, the withdrawal of all the outstanding rejections, and the allowance of all pending claims.

The final Office Action contains a number of statements and characterizations regarding the claims and the related art. Applicants decline to subscribe necessarily to any statement or characterization in the final Office Action, regardless of whether it is addressed above.

The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned (571-203-2735) if a telephone conversation might advance prosecution of the application.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW,
GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.

Dated: November 14, 2005

By: /David W. Hill/
David W. Hill
Reg. No. 28,220